

LEGIONS OF DEATH



LOTHLORIEN

Amstrad

Objective and setting

The game is set during the Punic Wars, a major conflict between the Roman Republic and Carthage which lasted from 264BC to the destruction of the Carthaginian capital in 146BC.

The game concentrates on the crucial factor governing the outcome of that series of wars – naval supremacy.

In 264BC, by a vote of the assembly of the people, a Roman army crossed the Straits of Messina to aid the Mamertines of Messana (Messina) against Carthage. It was thus on the economically rich island of Sicily that the two nations first met head-on.

The campaign went well for Rome, but it soon became apparent that she could not hold the Sicilian ports and coastal plains without a fleet to prevent Carthaginian supplies and reinforcements coming ashore. With help from King Hiero of Syracuse, they set about building ships after the Greek pattern – but with a vitally important difference.

Greek ships of the period were designed to ram and sink enemy vessels. A massive “rostra” projected from the front of the ship, and was able to cave in an enemy hull at the waterline. The Romans had more faith in their infantry than in sailors, though. By fitting their ships with a corvus - a manoeuvrable boarding plank – they could transfer their soldiers to an enemy vessel once it had been grappled and pulled alongside.

Once aboard, Roman discipline and training would do the rest!

The battle arena covers the central Mediterranean, and the Cartographic screen display allows close-up views of specific areas within that zone.

Your task is to ensure that your fleet gains the upper hand, while protecting your own ports. Failure to handle your forces effectively will lead inexorably to defeat, even

though you yourself lay down the conditions for victory.

Computer play

If you select one player mode, you will be given command of the Carthaginian fleet.

The computer will construct its own fleet and place its ships to its best advantage.

At the start of each game, the disposition of the computer's ships will vary according to the victory conditions you have set.

Once play starts, the computer will move its fleet intelligently in order to confound your strategy and to achieve its own objectives.

Conclusion

The game ends when one side achieves the pre-set victory conditions.

The computer will then ask if you wish to start a new game.

Gameplay — Amstrad version

Load the game, using 48K mode if you have a 128K machine, and the computer will give you a menu of options.

All selections can be made by joystick or keyboard. When using the joystick the usual backward/forward, right/left conventions apply. Moving on will confirm selections and call up the next screen where appropriate. To move on, give the fire or direction instruction as required.

When using the keyboard, the key designations are as follows:

8 = Up

2 = Down

4 = Left/Less than

6 = Right/Greater than

Space bar = Fire/Confirm

If you take the computer opponent option, you will play Carthage, and the computer will command the Roman fleet. If you select the two-player alternative, Carthage will buy and position first. The program will automatically switch between the players to give the sequence – Carthage buys its fleet; Rome buys its fleet; Carthage places its fleet; Rome places its fleet. In two player mode, Rome issues fleet orders before Carthage.

Victory Conditions

The Down Cursor key will unroll the scroll for setting victory conditions. Victory conditions are set by the human player(s), and cover the three categories of:

1. Gold held in the capital city
2. Cities captured
3. Enemy ships sunk

Care should be taken when selecting victory conditions. Remember that these criteria apply to your opponent too. The computer will play aggressively, and will take full advantage of victory conditions which are too easily achieved.

Building your fleet

Before starting your campaign you must first build your ships and man them.

When buying your fleet you will have an initial treasury of 1000 gold pieces. You do not have to spend all of this money.

The screens allowing you to build your ships introduce the first of a series of icons which enable you to find your way through the command structure and make your decisions. A flow chart of these icons is printed on the inlay card.



This icon enables you to start the buying process. Selection of this option will call up a series of screens requiring you to decide between types of vessel, types of crew, and so on. All selections are made by using the joystick.

The first choice to be made is that of ship. The types of vessel are listed on the parchment which unrolls at the left of the screen. There are five types of vessel, and each has its own characteristics in terms of size, speed, hull strength, and the numbers of troops she can carry.

The smallest ship is the bireme, which has only two banks of oars. It is nevertheless quite fast, but has sacrificed hull strength to achieve speed.

By contrast, the massive Ct Heptares is the slowest of the five ship designs, but has formidable hull strength and can carry large numbers of troops.

Information on each ship type is as below:

	Max	Max	Max	Max No	Max No
Ship	Gold	Speed	Hull	Marines	Archers
Bireme	10	4	2	3	1
Trireme	13	5	3	5	2
Quadreme	23	5	4	8	3
Quinquereme	32	4	5	10	4
Ct Heptares	45	3	7	13	4

Once you have chosen your first ship you may then man and equip it. A list of options will be displayed on a roll at the left of the screen. Details are given below:

Crews. The choice of crews affects the number of moves a ship can make at full speed. You may choose between four

types – slaves, green, average and expert. The better the crew the more moves can be made at maximum speed. The crew type also affects the outcome of grappling actions.

Naturally, crew costs vary according to type and the size of the vessel they sail on. Details are given below. The figures given are the number of gold pieces per crew.

Ship Type	Slaves	Green	Average	Expert
Bireme	15	23	33	48
Trireme	33	44	65	83
Quadreme	42	55	75	105
Quinquereme	47	62	80	112
Ct Heptares	70	86	108	140

Marines. Each ship type is allowed a maximum number of marines. These men are used to fight in the grappling sequences. The more marines a ship has, the greater the chance of capturing the enemy vessel. Each marine costs two gold pieces.

Corvus. The corvus is a stout boarding plank which is lowered onto the deck of an enemy ship. A heavy metal spike at the business end prevents disengagement until the attacking ship is ready to break off the grappling action. Possession of a corvus makes boarding a much quicker and effective operation, but may mean you also provide a means for enemy soldiers to board your ship.

The corvus is a Roman invention. Therefore in a game against the computer you should assume that all enemy ships will carry it.

The corvus costs 21 gold pieces.

Archers. Archers will be of use in any actions, even when contact is made between ships but neither ship elects to

grapple and board its adversary. Each archer costs 2 gold pieces.

Tower. The tower is a wooden structure which enables your archers to increase their range and have better visibility of enemy decks and rigging. The tower costs 9 gold pieces.

Sails. Sails are used to give a ship with the wind behind it an extra move in each phase. Conversely, a ship will lose its last move in each phase if the wind is head-on. A wind at any other heading will have the effect of modifying the set course and speed according to the interplay of orders and wind direction.

The large Cartographic display has a compass-like icon in the top right hand corner, which shows the direction the wind is blowing to. It is important to refer to this feature whenever you are using sails. The wind direction will change at random during the game.

Sails cost 10 gold pieces, and can be raised or lowered during the game, but will be lost if they are up during ramming.

Escape. Selection of fire/select will confirm purchase of your ship as you have specified, and will move you back to the icon option screen.

You now have the opportunity to buy further vessels. To vary the make-up of your fleet, reselect the BUY icon. You can, however, make other choices.



This icon will allow you to duplicate the last vessel bought.



This will enable you to cancel the last ship you bought and reformat it to any pattern you prefer.

By moving between BUY, COPY and REDO you can construct your fleet to suit your preferences and treasury. If you wish to buy more ships, you may return to

this group of icons at any stage during the game by selecting

(see flow chart).



Once you are satisfied with your fleet, select icon



Positioning your ships

You will now be asked to position your ships. They must be placed in your own ports. The program will not allow you to place vessels at any other location.

Each port position is indicated by a different coloured square to the port. It is possible for several ships to be placed at one port, but each ship must occupy a separate square.

These ships can be placed by making combined use of the Cartographic display on the left of the screen, and the close-up view to the right.

Note that in the computer-opponent mode you will now be able to see where Rome has placed her ships. An important point to remember is that Rome can start the game with ships already at sea and will begin with a full fleet complement of 16 vessels.

Once you have placed your ships, you will be ready to issue movement orders.

Issuing movement orders

To issue orders to your fleet requires correct manipulation of the command and enquiry structure of the program. The flow chart printed on the inlay card will enable you to follow the correct routes.

Explanations of the icons shown at each level in the chart are as follows:



This is a command to carry out the next phase of ship movements orders. Unless new orders have

been issued, the previous courses and speeds will be maintained, subject to collisions, wind changes and other relevant factors. If no orders have been issued to your vessels, enemy ships will still carry out their own manoeuvres if this icon is selected. Failure to give orders to your fleet effectively allows total freedom of the battle area to your opponent.



This icon will take you to the screen which enables you to save or load a part-finished game, or allow a fresh start by taking you back to the beginning of the program.



This icon will trigger the sequence of screens necessary to issue movement commands to your fleet. In two player mode, one the ORDERS icons is replaced by (see note below).



It should be noted that orders can only be issued to individual ships, not to all vessels in a blanket fashion.



Selecting this icon will enable you to explore the battle area by making use of LEGIONS OF DEATH'S Cartographic display screens.

Ships can be identified on the larger map as tiny dots, enabling you to home in for a closer look more easily. Use of this feature will enable you not only to focus on your ships, but also those of your opponent. By positioning the central sighting square over an enemy ship, you will be given a limited amount of information about the vessel, ie name and type. Reference to the specifications given above will then enable you to make an educated estimate of the possible strength of crew and weaponry on board, as well

as its potential speed and hull strength.

Use of this option is a mandatory first step when issuing orders to any vessel outside the range of the close-up Cartographic display.



By selecting this icon you can discover how the game is proceeding, and remind yourself of the victory conditions you have set down.



This icon is a mandatory selection when you wish to issue instructions to your fleet.

As mentioned previously, orders can only be given to individual ships. This icon allows you to target that ship, thus enabling you to gain access to the rest of the command structure of the program.

When this icon is chosen, you are asked to select a ship. This is done by positioning the sighting square as described previously, but over your own vessel.

Details about this ship will then be displayed, and by leaving the SELECT mode you have identified which vessel the orders which follow relate to. By pressing Fire, you may continue with your instructions to the selected ship.



By selecting this option you will be able to carry out various operations in port, such as collecting tribute and carrying out repairs. It is also the first step in buying vessels to enlarge your initial fleet.



Selecting this icon will reverse the status of your sails. By selecting and reselecting you can put your sails up or down at any point during the game.



This option icon will allow you to check the current and target speeds of your ship, and ammend them as required. Note that only one unit of speed

change is possible in each cycle of moves. To move from speed of 1 to 3, or vice versa, will therefore take two moves.



By selecting this option you will be able to alter the current course being followed by your ship. If the vessel is at rest, you will be given the course last ordered. Move Up, Down, Left or Right as required to alter course. The faster a ship is moving, the more difficult a course change will be.

Whatever speed your ship is doing, however, you will be unable to make radical course changes unless the vessel is stationary. In that case, you will be asked to select a new course, or you may continue with the old course if preferred.



This option allows you to toggle between two option screens (see flow chart for icons on each screen).



This icon allows access to several useful features (see flow chart). With the exception of buying new ships, however, the icons reached through this option can only be used if the ship selected is actually in port. Once the game has started, and unless you are positioning newly bought vessels, the different coloured squares which show the available berths in a port will disappear. It is therefore possible to be just outside a port unless you pay close attention to your game.



Largely self-explanatory, but can only be used in friendly port which has gold ready to pick up.



As the previous icon, but in reverse. The same conditions on ship position apply.



In two player mode, this replaces one of the ORDERS icons and initiates a change of turn, allowing your opponent to make his moves.



This option allows you to return to the beginning of the program and start a new game.



This option icon allows you to save a part finished game onto cassette.



This icon enables you to load a part finished game from cassette.



This icon appears at several points in the program. It enables you to return to the previous screen, ie. the screen immediately upstream on the flow chart. A quick look at the chart itself will show exactly how this works. From the diagram you can see that on some occasions you may have to engage several RETURN icons in succession in order to travel between any two screens.

Playing hints

Whether playing against a human or computer opponent, beware of making the victory conditions too easy, since they apply to both parties in this contest of skill and planning.

If you are playing against the computer remember that

Rome will start the game with certain advantages. You must therefore spend your money wisely when building your fleet, and it may be advisable to economise on equipment in the opening stages in order to buy as many ships as possible. With the tribute you can then collect, you can construct more formidable vessels to attack enemy ships and ports.

Again, when playing against the computer, you must expect your opponent to play very aggressively. Rome will try to send large numbers of ships against any isolated vessel, and due allowance must be made for this tendency to hunt in packs.

The realistic use of grappling engagements requires you to use your judgement when involved in this type of action, and where possible you should avoid situations where you cannot inflict damage relatively safely.

LEGIONS OF DEATH is designed to incorporate all the skills of judgement, forethought, and quick effective response to rapidly changing circumstances which a fleet admiral would have needed in this type of warfare.

Without close attention to detailed tactics and overall strategy, mistakes will be punished heavily and often with remarkable speed.

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